

Idaho Charter Schools Primer 2007-2008

Charter schools are free public schools that are open and available to all students. A charter school gives parents the choice of sending their children to a school that uses innovative methods to provide a quality education in a smaller, more responsive learning environment. Charter schools are part of the public education system and are committed to improving public education.

Idaho Code Title 33 Chapter 52	Charter Schools 2007-2008
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Idaho's charter school law was passed in 1998. Teachers, parents and community members may establish public charter schools. Public charter schools operate independently from the existing traditional school district structure, but within the existing public school system. The number of start-up charter schools is currently limited to 6 per year. A charter may not be granted to or operated by a for-profit entity. No private or parochial school may convert to charter status. A public charter school is organized and managed under the Idaho non-profit corporation act. A charter school board of directors functions independently of any school board in any district. Charter schools may be district conversion schools or new start-up schools; to date all are new start-up schools. Local boards of trustees or the Idaho Public Charter School Commission may grant charters. If the IPCSC grants a charter, the school becomes an LEA. Idaho has a seven member, Governor-appointed, Charter School Commission (three from local boards of trustees, three from charter school boards, and one at large member). Authorizers may revoke charters; to date one has been revoked. Charters are granted for an indefinite time frame. 	<p>30 charter schools are currently in operation in Idaho. 16 are authorized by local school district; 14 are authorized by the Idaho Public Charter School Commission.</p> <p>Northern Idaho Coeur D'Alene SD #271, 6-12 Moscow SD #281, K-6 Sandpoint SD #84, 7-9</p> <p>Southeastern Idaho Blackfoot SD #55, K-6 Idaho Falls LEA, K-12 Idaho Falls LEA, K-7 Pocatello LEA, K-8 Pocatello SD #25, K-8 Minidoka SD #331, 7-12 Salmon SD #291, K-3 Snake River SD #52, 9-12 Twin Falls LEA, K-8</p> <p>Southwestern Idaho Boise SD #1 K-7 Boise SD #1, K-9 Boise LEA, K-8 Boise LEA, K-8 Meridian SD #2, K-8 Meridian SD #2, 9-12 Meridian SD #2, 9-12 Meridian LEA, K-8 Middleton LEA, K-7 Nampa SD #131, K-12 Nampa LEA (2), K-7 Nampa LEA, K-12 Vallivue SD #139, K-7 Kuna LEA, K-8</p> <p>Statewide Virtual Boise LEA, K-8 Boise LEA, K-12 Mountain Home LEA, 9-12 Whitepine SD #288, K-12</p>

Legislative Intent of Idaho's Charter Law

Charter schools were established as a method to accomplish any of the following:

- 1) Improve student learning;
- 2) Increase learning opportunities for all students with special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for students;
- 3) Include the use of different and innovative teaching methods;
- 4) Utilize virtual distance learning and on-line learning;
- 5) Create new professional opportunities for teachers, including the opportunity to be responsible for the learning program at the school site;
- 6) Provide parents and students with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available within the public schools system;
- 7) Hold the schools established under this chapter accountable for meeting measurable student educational standards.

Charter Schools are Accountable

- Charter schools are required to report to their board and authorizers regarding their students are meeting the measurable educational standards as set forth in the charter
- Charter schools complete annual fiscal and programmatic audits.
- Charter schools comply with federal laws, state laws, local ordinances
- Charter schools participate in all statewide assessments.
- Charter schools must be accredited.
- Charter schools may participate in the Idaho Charter School Network Accountability Plan. (<http://csi.boisestate.edu/icsn>)
- Ultimately, charter schools are accountable to the marketplace.

Distinguishing Elements of Charter Schools

- They play an important part in school reform by serving as research and development centers for the public education system.
- They are pioneers and innovators--mission driven schools created by educators and community members who envision a school committed to a particular purpose and philosophy.
- Charter school legislation honors parents' rights to make informed choices about their children's education.
- They have a record of high student achievement. When they fail, they are closed, not unlike a business.



Funding for Charter Schools

- State funding for charter schools, like other public schools is based on Average Daily Attendance (ADA).
- Charter schools have no bonding authority and so pay facilities costs with operations funding.
- They may request a 25% advance for start-up purposes in the first year and in years of substantive growth.
- To date approximately 11 million dollars have been granted to Idaho charter schools through a federal Charter School Support Program Grant.